Amendments to the Claims:

Claim 31 is amended herein. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-30 (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing oxidation of an electrically conductive material, comprising:

forming a first dielectric layer on a semiconductor structure, the first dielectric layer comprising a depression therein;

filling the depression with an unoxidized electrically conductive material;

reacting a chemical composition with an upper surface of the electrically conductive material to form a chemical compound more resistant to oxidation than the electrically conductive material; and

forming a second dielectric layer over the electrically conductive material and the first dielectric layer and adhering the second dielectric layer to the electrically conductive material, wherein reacting a chemical composition and forming a second dielectric layer occur simultaneously.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein filling the depression with an electrically conductive material comprises filling the depression with a refractory metal.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein reacting the chemical composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises reacting the chemical composition with at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically

conductive material.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein reacting the chemical composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises reacting a nitrogen-containing composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein reacting the nitrogen-containing composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises exposing the upper surface of the electrically conductive material to the nitrogen-containing composition for a period of time less than or equal to approximately 30 seconds.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein reacting the chemical composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises reacting ammonia, diatomic nitrogen, or nitrogen-containing silane with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein reacting the chemical composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises forming a nitride of a refractory metal of the electrically conductive material on the upper surface or forming an adsorbed complex of a nitrogen-containing composition on the upper surface.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein reacting the chemical composition with the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises providing a nitrogen-containing composition, heating the first dielectric layer to a temperature of less than or equal to approximately 400°C, and exposing the upper surface to the nitrogen-containing composition to form the chemical compound.

39. (Canceled)

40. (Previously Presented) A method of reducing oxidation of an electrically conductive material, comprising:

forming a dielectric layer on a semiconductor structure, the dielectric layer comprising a depression therein;

filling the depression with an unoxidized electrically conductive material;

adsorbing a chemical composition onto an upper surface of the electrically conductive material to form a chemical compound more resistant to oxidation than the electrically conductive material; and

forming a second dielectric layer over the electrically conductive material and the first dielectric layer and adhering the second dielectric layer to the electrically conductive material.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein adsorbing the chemical composition onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises adsorbing a nitrogen-containing composition onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein adsorbing the chemical composition onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises adsorbing ammonia, diatomic nitrogen, or nitrogen-containing silane onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein adsorbing the chemical composition onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises forming an adsorbed complex of a nitrogen-containing composition onto the upper surface.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein adsorbing the chemical composition onto the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises providing a nitrogen-containing composition, heating the dielectric layer to a temperature of less than or equal to approximately 400°C, and exposing the upper surface to the nitrogen-containing composition to form the chemical compound.

45. (Previously Presented) A method of reducing oxidation of an electrically conductive material, comprising, comprising:

reacting a chemical composition with at least one monolayer of an upper surface of an unoxidized electrically conductive material to form a chemical compound more resistant to oxidation than the electrically conductive material; and

adhering a dielectric layer to the electrically conductive material.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein reacting the chemical composition with at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises reacting a nitrogen-containing composition with the at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein reacting the chemical composition with at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises reacting ammonia, diatomic nitrogen, or nitrogen-containing silane with the at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically conductive material.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein reacting the chemical composition with at least one monolayer of the upper surface of the electrically conductive material comprises forming a nitride of a refractory metal of the electrically conductive material on the upper surface or forming an adsorbed complex of a nitrogen-containing composition on the upper surface.